

Mr. SANDERS. Very interesting. They do polls and they ask the American people, how do you think we should deal with the Social Security situation?

The one alternative is to raise the age at which they get benefits. The other solution is to cut back on benefits. And the American people respond. Then they said, what about raising the cap, exactly what are my colleague is talking about. Poll after poll shows the American people think that is a very good idea. They think it is appropriate.

As the gentleman just indicated, if they raise the cap, not only can they can create Social Security solvency for the 75 years that the actuaries actually want, they could actually have a tax deduction for low and medium income workers, which makes a lot of sense to me.

But amazingly, despite the fact that this is an idea that the American people want, how many people in the Congress are even prepared to talk about that idea? Not a whole lot.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, I am circulating a letter to all our colleagues this week asking them to sign on to the bill, which I will introduce when we return from the July 4 break.

I think that certainly there will be many who will be interested in a progressive Social Security reform, a way to cut taxes for 95 percent of wage-earning Americans and assure the future of Social Security for generations to come. It sounds like a pretty good deal to me. And we will see if, for once, we can overcome the influence of those few wealthy people who spend so much financing the campaigns, particularly on the majority side of the aisle here.

Mr. SANDERS. I think we are coming toward the end of our time. I want to thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for all of the work that he does in the Congress and for his participation this evening.

I would like to conclude on this note. We have touched on a number of problems, but that does not make us pessimistic. It is my belief, and I know I speak for my colleague as well, that if working people and middle-income people and young people get involved in the political process, if they let the Congress and the President hear from them, if they make the political leaders of this country understand what their needs are and they will get involved, we can turn this country around.

We should not be proud that the wealthiest people have seen huge increases in their income and their wealth at the same time as we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of any industrialized nation. We should not be proud that 43 million Americans have no health insurance and that we are the only country in the industrialized world without a national health insurance system. We should not be

proud that the CEOs make over 300 times what their workers make and that in the midst of the so-called economic boom, the average American worker today is earning less than was the case 25 years ago.

But ultimately to turn that around, to make the Government of the United States work for the middle class, work for working families, rather than for upper-income people, people are going to have to get involved in the process. They are going to have to vote. They are going to have to be informed about the issues. They are going to have to run for office. They are going to have to revitalize American democracy and pay tribute to the founders of this country who gave us the radical concept of democracy.

So I would hope that all of our people, especially the young people who are turning their backs to our Democratic system, get involved and stand up and fight for the rights of ordinary people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for joining me this evening.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

COLORADO CATTLE CONCERNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite those Members of the Republican Conference who may be monitoring tonight's proceedings and have something that they would like to add in the next hour during this special order to come on down to the floor and join in. I secure this hour every now and then on behalf of the Republican Conference just for that purpose.

One of the topics I wanted to discuss was with respect to some good news in agriculture over the last couple of weeks. Because while the bull is still loose on Wall Street, months after the analysts and pundits first began warning in earnest of overpriced stocks and certainly financial meltdowns, another young crop of fresh-from-college-20-somethings with a computer and a catchy slogan has launched their initial public offerings and made millions.

Granted, short of cashing in their stock options, their net worth is only on paper and few Internet start-ups have yet to post real profits. But the investor cash fueling the IPO madness is real, and leading economic indicators suggest no predicted slowdown in the economy.

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Consumer spending is up while unemployment rates are down. Business sec-

tor productivity, personal income and new home starts, all important indicators, are all on the rise.

Yet while that bull stampedes through the streets of New York, many of the cattle along the dusty cattle roads of eastern Colorado are going nowhere. That just might change soon. Until this month, the Clinton administration has done little to help America's cattle industry and cattle ranchers in their decades-long trade dispute with the European Union over U.S. growth hormones which meant that Colorado's cattle intended for slaughter and export to European consumers were banned and banned on the basis of dubious science.

Under prior World Trade Organization rulings, the European Union was required to drop its ban on U.S. beef imports absent risk assessments and scientific justification by May 13, 1999. The European Union refused to do so and in response the United States was notified of the World Trade Organization's intent to impose a 100 percent retaliatory tariff on approximately \$202 million of European Union products. This level of retaliation is estimated to be far short of the true value of U.S. beef that would be exported to the European Union absent the ban, but it is enough to get the attention of those nations which might utilize unfair trade tactics in the future.

Colorado agriculture increasingly depends upon the export market to expand sales and increase revenues and to expand world trade and agriculture has a significant impact on both the U.S. trade balance and on specific commodities and individual farmers. The cards are stacked against farmers and ranchers to begin with. No sector of the economy is subject to more international trade barriers than agriculture. The import quotas, high tariffs, government-buying monopolies and import bans imposed by other nations coupled with the overwhelming number of trade sanctions and embargoes imposed on other countries by our own government cost the American agriculture industry billions of dollars each year in lost export opportunities. These barriers continue to grow despite the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT, and the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. Without question, they are devastating the ability for American producers to compete effectively, particularly at a time when exports now account for over 30 percent of U.S. farm cash receipts and nearly 40 percent of all agricultural production.

This particular dispute over the presence of growth-promoting hormones dates back to 1989 when the European Union put into effect a ban on the production and importation of meat containing such compounds. Growth-promoting hormones are widely used in the United States as well as other top